



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

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# News Release

## **ICE AND HONDURAN GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCE NEW TELECONFERENCING PROGRAM TO SPEED DEPORTATIONS**

*Honduran Government will be the first to conduct consular interviews by video teleconference*

HOUSTON, Texas — U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), in cooperation with the government of Honduras, today announced the first Video Teleconferencing (VTC) pilot program, which is aimed at expediting interviews of Honduran immigration detainees in order to speed the removal of these detainees.

ICE and the government of Honduras, working with the U.S. State Department, began discussions on VTC capability in February 2005. The pilot program will enable Honduran consular offices to interview detainees via video teleconference to confirm their nationality, rather than through in-person interviews. Confirmation of nationality is required to obtain travel documents and complete the deportation of these detainees. VTC will provide consular offices with an additional tool to conduct detainee interviews more frequently, allowing ICE to complete deportations more quickly.

"The VTC is a great example of the innovative approach ICE is taking to immigration enforcement," said Marc J. Moore, ICE San Antonio field office director. "Consular officers are able to quickly reach out to Honduran citizens in our custody, while ICE is able to save money by reducing the amount of time detainees stay in detention and completing the deportation more rapidly."

The Honduran Ambassador to the U.S., Norman Garcia, also commented on the new pilot: "The Government of President Ricardo Maduro has realized the importance of the Honduran Community in the U.S., that is why his administration has recognized the importance of the VTC project — for Hondurans won't have to stay in detention centers longer than they need be, and will be able to go back to their families ASAP."

The government of Honduras officially approved using VTC on April 26, 2005 after careful consideration. This pilot program will soon be expanded to Honduran consular offices in Phoenix, Ariz., and Los Angeles, Calif. The government of Honduras indicated that VTC capability will ultimately be installed in all of its consulate offices across the nation.

This VTC program is the latest of several initiatives launched by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to deter aliens from illegally entering the United States by apprehending and quickly removing them to their countries of origin. Last month, for example, Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff expanded Expedited Removal (ER) authority to the entire southwest border.

ER is an administrative process aimed at reducing the number of “Other than Mexicans” (OTMs) who have spent less than 14 days in the United States and who are apprehended within 100 miles of the border. OTMs apprehended under ER are detained and quickly returned to their countries of origin after receiving their travel documents. They are not required to appear before a federal immigration judge. According to DHS statistics, from October 2004 through August 2005, ICE repatriated more than 6,600 Honduran nationals.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*